Backpacking the West Highland Way

May 17-29, 2016

Four nights hotel, breakfasts and dinners in Glasgow; day trip to Edinburgh; ground transportation; all trail meals, group equipment, and permits. $1,600.00

Trip Overview

Originally used as an old military road to suppress Scottish rebellions, the West Highland Way rambles through 96 miles of the Scottish highlands. The hills and valleys we will traverse were historically ruled by a handful of Highland Clans whose fighting plagued the region for nearly 700 years, dating all the way back to the 11th century. In the eighteenth century, the West Highlands were home to Jacobite rebels and government suppression. This trip will explore the country’s social, economic, and cultural history, while backpacking for six days.

After meeting and preparing for our trek in Glasgow and exploring Edinburgh for a day, we will pick up our trail at the Bridge of Orchy and follow it all the way to Fort William. As we walk, or “ramble” as the Scots say, we will pass through moors, mountains, rolling hills and camp next to local inns or pubs, where we will be able to get a taste of the local flavor. This is a unique way to learn about the Scottish identity and to explore the complex history of the striking Scottish Highlands.

General Schedule of Trip

Tuesday, May 17th: Depart independently to arrive in Glasgow, Scotland on the 18th.
May 18: Arrive in Glasgow and catch a taxi or bus to Kelvin hotel.
May 19: Explore Glasgow and make final preparations.
May 20: Take train to explore Edinburgh.
May 21: Catch a bus to Bridge of Orchy and begin the hike!
May 22-27: Trekking the West Highland Way.
May 28: Arrive in Fort William. Catch a bus from Fort William back to the hotel in Glasgow, final group dinner.
Sunday, May 29th: Return home or continue traveling on your own.

Facilitators

This program will be facilitated by Quinn Heist ’16 and Elizabeth Berriman ’16 of GRAB, and Dr. Ian Isherwood ’00, Assistant Director of the Civil War Institute. Quinn is an Environmental Studies major and studied abroad in Tanzania, Africa during his junior year. Elizabeth is a Health Science Major and member of APO, a co-ed service organization.

Dr. Isherwood is a graduate of Gettysburg College and received a Ph.D. in modern history from the University of Glasgow. His research interests are in British History.

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Registration and Payment: Registration is at www.gettysburg.edu/grab. A $150 non-refundable deposit is due at time of registration to secure a place on the trip of your choice. We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover, e-checks or cash. The final payment will be required at least 60 days prior the trip departure date. To register, please fill out the online form or call the Office of Experiential Education at 717.337.6319.

Not Included in the Price: Hospitalization, individual evacuation costs, insurance, meals in destination cities prior to and at the conclusion of the trip, souvenirs, alcohol, excess baggage charges, or other personal expenses incurred outside the scope of the trip. We DO NOT include airfare in the pricing of our trips. We want to give participants the opportunity to have flexibility in their travel arrangements. Some people will have frequent flyer miles, many people will be traveling from various destinations, while others may already be at the site location or decide to extend their trip once our expedition has concluded.

The Trek: Trekking distances range from 7-12 miles a day. Average trekking time ranges from 3-6 hours per day, which includes stops for lunch & breaks, appreciating the sites, general conversation, and sometimes just figuring out the route. The trekking series expeditions are designed to accommodate those who enjoy trekking at a moderate pace but also enjoy taking numerous stops to enjoy the location.

Group Size: The trip consists of two GRAB staff members from the Office of Experiential Education, Dr. Isherwood and up to nine participants from the Gettysburg College community; students, employees and their families, and alumni of the college are all welcome.

Transportation: You are responsible for your own flights to and from Glasgow International airport and for your transportation from the airport to the hotel, and back to the airport at the end of the program. All other ground transportation will be arranged and provided. If you plan on traveling further following the trip, you are responsible for those logistics as well.

Accommodations: The program’s accommodations will include three nights in a hotel in Glasgow, and camping in both developed and undeveloped sites along the West Highland Way.

Meals: In Glasgow and Edinburgh, the price of the program covers all breakfasts, lunches and dinners, excluding alcohol. On the trail, breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be provided each day. Participants will be responsible for any additional snacks or meals off the trail while traveling to and from Scotland.

Weather: Be prepared for warm, sunny days, typical Scottish Highland mist, rain, and the possible “cloud” of midges. Average temperatures at this time of year range from 40 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit, but the higher elevations of the Munros (elevation >3000 feet) and Ben Nevis can bring extreme weather conditions.

Physical Preparation: You do not need to be a top notch athlete to participate on this program, but proper preparation will make the trip much more enjoyable. Exercising 3-5 days a week and walking with a 30 pound pack to get used to the weight are great ways to prepare. No prior experience hiking is required, and all backcountry skills and expectations will be covered during the trip.

Health and Medical & Release of Liability: We require each participant to fill out medical/liability forms for Gettysburg College and for any contracted services who request similar documentation. We can provide information on short term insurance that covers baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation which is required for our international programs. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Cancellation of Trips: We reserve the right to cancel trips due to lack of participants, State Department warnings, or natural occurrences that may be potentially hazardous. If you cancel the trip more than 60 days before the departure date, you will receive a full refund minus the $150 deposit. If cancellation occurs 45 -60 days prior to the departure date a 50% refund is available. If cancellation occurs 21 - 44 days prior to the trip a 25% refund will be available. There will be no refunds for cancellations made within 21 days of the expedition.